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Attic Inscriptions in UK Collections *Lyme Park*

Peter Liddel and Polly Low

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PREFACE

Lyme Park, a National Trust property in Cheshire, contains two inscriptions of Attic, perhaps Athenian, provenance, both of which are well-preserved funerary monuments. The configuration of their current display – alongside an uninscribed piece of sculpture – preserves the design commissioned by their collector, Thomas Legh, when he had Lyme Hall refurbished in the 1810s. They are therefore important to our understanding of the reception of classical aesthetics in the early nineteenth century.

We are very grateful to the staff of Lyme Park for their assistance in making arrangements for our autopsy of the inscriptions. We would like also to thank the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) and the Archaeological Institute of the University of Cologne for granting us permission to reproduce images originally published in Scholl 1995a. Mr R. Laev was the photographer. Stephen Lambert, S. Doulgas Olson, P. J. Rhodes, Robert Pitt and the anonymous reader for AIUK, offered valuable comments on earlier drafts, and Tim Parkin provided helpful advice on infant and maternal demography and mortality; we are happy to record our thanks to them.

ABBREVIATIONS

In addition to the abbreviations listed at <https://www.atticinscriptions.com/browse/bysource/> the following abbreviations are used in this volume:

Agora XXXV: J. B. Grossman, *The Athenian Agora. Results of Excavations conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. Volume XXXV. Funerary Sculpture* (2013)

Andrianou: D. Andrianou, *The Furniture and Furnishings of Ancient Greek Houses and Tombs* (2009)

Athenian Onomasticon: S. Byrne, *Athenian Onomasticon*. Online: <http://www.seangb.org/> [accessed: 10/05/19]

Bäbler: B. Bäbler, “Fremde Frauen im Athen. Thrakische Ammen und athenische Kinder”, in U. Riemer and P. Primer eds., *Xenophobie-Philoxenie. Vom Umgang mit Fremden in der Antike* (2005), 65-88

Beamont: W. Beamont, *A History of the House of Lyme* (1876; with additional notes by C. Thornber, 2013)

Bobou: O. Bobou, *Children in the Hellenistic World: Statues and Representation* (2014)

Clairmont, *CAT*: C. Clairmont, *Classical Attic Tombstones*, 8 vols. 1993 (suppl. vol. 1995)

Closterman: W. E. Klosterman, “Family Ideology and Family History: The Function of Funerary Markers in Classical Attic Peribolos Tombs”, *American Journal of Archaeology* 111, 2007, 633-52

Cremer: M. Cremer, “Die Dexiosis auf hellenistischen Grabstelen”, in *Studien zum antiken Kleinasien* 3 (1995) 1-7

Croston: J. Croston, *Historic Sites of Lancashire and Cheshire* (1883)

Csapo: E. Csapo, *Actors and Icons of the Ancient Theatre* (2010)

Davies 1985: G. Davies, “The Significance of the Handshake Motif in Classical Funerary Art”, *American Journal of Archaeology* 89, 627-40

Davies 1994: G. Davies, “The Language of Gesture in Greek Art: Gender and Status on Grave Stelai”, *Apollo* 140, 6-11

Demand: N. Demand, *Birth, Death and Motherhood in Classical Greece* (1994)

Friis Johansen: K. Friis Johansen, *The Attic Grave-Reliefs of the Classical Period. An Essay in Interpretation* (1951)

Grossman 2001: J. B. Grossman, *Greek Funerary Sculpture: Catalogue of the Collections at the Getty Villa*

Guilding: R. Guilding, *Owning the Past. Why the English Collected Antique Sculpture, 1640-1840* (2014)

Hagemajer Allen: K. Hagemajer Allen, “Becoming the ‘Other’: Attitudes and Practices at Attic Cemeteries”, in C. Dougherty and L. Kurke eds., *The Cultures within Ancient Greek Culture: Contact, Conflict, Collaboration* (2003), 207-36

Harvey: D. Harvey, “Phrynichos and his Muses”, in D. Harvey and J. Wilkins eds., *The Rivals of Aristophanes* (2000), 91-134

Himmelman: N. Himmelman, “Grabstele eines Dichters der Mittleren Komödie in Lyme Hall”, in H. Froning, T. Hölscher, and H. Mielsch eds., *Kotinos: Festschrift für Erika Simon* (1992), 267-69

Humphreys: S. C. Humphreys, *Kinship in Ancient Athens: An Anthropological Analysis* (2018)

- Irby and Mangles: C. L. Irby and J. Mangles, *Travels in Egypt and Nubia, Syria and Asia Minor during the Years 1817 and 1818* (1844)
- Kelly: J. M. Kelly, *The Society of Dilettanti. Archaeology and Identity in the British Enlightenment* (2009)
- Kosmopoulou: A. Kosmopoulou, “‘Working Women’: Female Professionals on Classical Attic Gravestones”, *Annual of the British School at Athens* 96, 2001, 281-319
- Lefkowitz and Fant: M. R. Lefkowitz and M. B. Fant, *Women’s Life in Greece and Rome. A Source Book in Translation*. 4th edition (2016)
- Legh: T. Legh, *Narrative of a Journey in Egypt and the Country beyond the Cataracts*. 2nd edition (1817)
- Links, J. G. *Canaletto and his Patrons* (1977)
- Llewellyn-Jones: L. Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite’s Tortoise. The Veiled Woman of Ancient Greece* (2003)
- Macmichael: W. Macmichael, *Journey from Moscow to Constantinople, in the Years 1817, 1818* (1819)
- Marchiandi: D. Marchiandi, *I periboli funerari nell’Attica classica: lo specchio di una “borghesia”* (2011)
- Margariti 2016a: K. Margariti, “A Mother’s Gaze: Death and Orphanhood on Classical Attic Grave Reliefs”, *BABesch - Annual Papers on Mediterranean Archaeology* 91, 87-104
- Margariti 2016b: “On Identifying the Deceased in Two-Figured and Multi-Figured Scenes of Classical Attic Funerary Reliefs”, *Journal of Greek Archaeology* 1, 177-92
- Meyer: E. Meyer, “Epitaphs and Citizenship in Classical Athens”, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 113, 1993, 99-121
- Michaelis: A. T. F. Michaelis, *Ancient Marbles in Great Britain*, translated from the German by C. A. M. Fennell (1882)
- Michaelis 1884: A. T. F. Michaelis, “Ancient Greek Marbles in Britain. Supplement I”, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 5, 143-61
- Moorehead: A. Moorehead, *The Blue Nile*. 2nd edition (1972)
- Oakley and Sinos: J. H. Oakley and R. H. Sinos, *The Wedding in Ancient Athens* (1993)
- ODNB: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (online at <https://www.oxforddnb.com/> [accessed 24/06/19])
- Oliver: G. J. Oliver, “Images of Death: Inscribed Funerary Monuments from Fourth-Century Athens to Neo-Classical England”, in A. Cooley ed., *The Afterlife of Epigraphy, BICS Supplement* 75 (2000), 125-41
- Osborne 1997: R. J. Osborne, “Law, the Democratic Citizen and the Representation of Women in Classical Athens”, *Past and Present* 155, 3-33
- Osborne 2011: R. J. Osborne, *The History Written on the Classical Greek Body*
- PAA: J. S. Traill, *Persons of Ancient Athens*. 21 vols. (1994-2012)
- Parkin: T. G. Parkin, *Demography and Roman Society* (1992)
- PCG: R. Kassel and C. Austin, *Poetae Comici Graeci* (1983-)
- Pemberton: E. G. Pemberton, “The *Dexiosis* on Attic Gravestones”, *Mediterranean Archaeology* 2, 1989, 45-50
- Port: M. H. Port, “Legh, Thomas (?1793-1857), of Lyme Hall, Cheshire”, in R. Thorne ed., *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1820-1832* (1986)
- Rothwell: J. Rothwell, *Lyme Park House and Garden* (1998)
- Schaps: D. Schaps, *The Economic Rights of Women in Ancient Greece* (1979)
- Scholl 1995a: A. Scholl, *Die antiken Skulpturen in Farnborough Hall sowie in Althorp House, Blenheim Palace, Lyme Park und Penrice Castle*

- Scholl 1995b: A. Scholl, "Nicht Aristophanes, Sondern Epigenes: das Lyme-Park-Relief und die Darstellung von Dichtern und Schauspielern auf Attischen Grabdenkmälern", *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts (Athen)* 110, 213-38
- Scholl 1996: A. Scholl, *Die attischen Bildfeldstelen des 4. Jhs. v. Chr.: Untersuchungen zu den kleinformatigen Grabreliefs im spätklassischen Athen* (1996)
- Schulze: H. Schulze, *Ammen und Pädagogen. Sklavinnen und Sklaven als Erzieher in der antiken Kunst und Gesellschaft* (1998)
- Stackelberg: O. M. von Stackelberg, *Die Gräber der Hellenen* (1837)
- Stears: K. E. Stears, "Dead Women's Society: Constructing Female Gender in Classical Athenian Funerary Sculpture", in N. Spencer ed., *Time, Tradition, and Society in Greek Archaeology: Bridging the "Great Divide"* (1995), 109-31
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- Strong: E. Strong, "Three Sculptured *Stelai* in the Possession of Lord Newton at Lyme Park", *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 23, 1903, 356-59
- Todd: S. C. Todd, *The Shape of Athenian Law* (1993)
- Threatte: L. Threatte, *The Grammar of Attic Inscriptions*, 2 vols. (1980-96)
- Traill: J. S. Traill, *The Political Organization of Attica*. *Hesperia* Supplement 14
- Vedder: U. Vedder, "Frauentod-Kriegertod im Spiegel der attischen Grabkunst des 4. Jhr v. Chr.", *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts (Athenische Abteilung)*, 103, 1988, 161-91
- Vermeule: C. C. Vermeule, "Notes on a New Edition of Michaelis: Ancient Marbles in Great Britain", *American Journal of Archaeology* 59, 1955, 129-50
- Webster: T. B. L. Webster, *Monuments Illustrating Old and Middle Comedy*. 3rd edition, by J. R. Green (1978)
- Whitehead: D. Whitehead, *The Demes of Attica, 508/7 - ca. 250 B.C.: A Political and Social Study* (1986)
- Who Was Who*: M. L. Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*. 4th edition (2012).

1. ATTIC INSCRIPTIONS IN LYME PARK

The three pieces of ancient Athenian sculpture displayed in the Hall of Lyme Park at Disley in Cheshire – currently, like the subject of *AIUK* 1, Petworth House, under the direct management of the National Trust – are a legacy of Thomas Legh (1792-1857), who inherited the Lyme estate, and with it a significant fortune, upon his father's death in 1797.¹

Legh's interest in the antiquities of Greece can be traced to a specific (and brief) period of his life, and – like that of other travellers and collectors of this period – appears to have owed more (in its origins at least) to a general desire for adventure than to any great interest or expertise in ancient sculpture, still less ancient inscriptions.² In 1810 he began his studies at Brasenose College, Oxford,³ but seems rapidly to have decided that greater excitements could be found elsewhere; in 1811, he travelled to Greece, in the company of his tutor (the Rev. Charles Smelt). The decision to head east, Legh claimed (probably with a degree of ostentatious self-deprecation), was prompted not so much by a particular desire to visit the region as by the fact that the Napoleonic Wars had made northern European cities inaccessible: “a visit to Athens and Constantinople supplied the place of a gay and dissipated winter passed in Paris, Vienna or Petersburg” (Legh, v).⁴

But although Athens is initially presented as a (poor) substitute for the “modern cities of civilized Europe” (Legh, v-vi), Legh was later more willing to concede its appeal: “nothing”, he wrote, “can be more delightful than a residence at Athens: and every traveller will do well, at whatever point of Greece he may land, to lose no time in repairing to this celebrated city” (Legh, 21-22, n.). Legh spent two months in Athens, during which time he undertook what he describes as “extensive excavations”. We will return to these excavations below, but it is important to emphasise that Legh did not consider his stay in Athens to have been a particularly important part of his travels (it is, quite literally, a footnote in the revised edition of the *Narrative of a Journey in Egypt and the Country beyond the Cataracts*, which he published in 1817). Far more space is devoted to the story of his (apparently rather minor) role in the removal of the frieze of the Temple of Apollo in Bassai (Legh, 23-34), an escapade which perhaps allowed more scope for tales of exploration, subterfuge, and perilous encounters with Turkish officialdom than did the more well-trodden paths of Athens and Attica;⁵ and more space again (as the work's title implies) to his explorations of Egypt, which he first visited in 1812-13.⁶

Legh returned briefly to England at the end of 1813, but in September 1814 he embarked on further adventures: he visited Arabia, reaching Ibrim in Nubia, and is said to have voyaged “further up the Nile than any European had previously travelled”.⁷ By 1815 he had

¹ Oliver, 129-33. Legh was the oldest illegitimate son of Col. Thomas Peter Legh (1753-1797); his claim to the estate was established in Col. Legh's will (Beamont, 103). Petworth: see [AIUK 1](#).

² On the “Grand Tour” as the “finishing school of the English, Scottish and Irish elite”, see Kelly, 13. The traditional route of the Grand Tour did not extend as far east as Greece, but the region became a more common destination when the Napoleonic Wars made travel to Italy problematic: Kelly, 103-4; as noted below, this was also a factor in Legh's decision to travel to Greece.

³ *Who Was Who*, s.v. “Legh, Thomas (1793-1857)”.

⁴ Legh, v-vi.

⁵ Legh, 21-22, n., observes that “The Turks also of this city [i.e. Athens] are more accustomed to the sight of Franks, and strangers are consequently less exposed to insults than in most other towns of Greece”.

⁶ *Who Was Who*, s.v. “Legh, Thomas (1793-1857)”.

⁷ Rothwell, 53; Moorehead, 175-86, discusses the context for Legh and Smelt's Egyptian expedition, emphasising the “insouciance of their journey” (176), but suggesting that it did play a significant role in encouraging further, more systematic, explorations of the region.

returned to Europe (he is reported to have been present at the Battle of Waterloo, although his exact role there is slightly unclear);⁸ was enrolled as a member of the Society of Dilettanti in 1816;⁹ and, as already noted, published his account of his travels and discoveries in 1817.¹⁰ He visited Egypt and the Levant again in 1817-18,¹¹ but in his later life his concerns appear to have been more locally-focussed: he served as MP for the notoriously rotten borough of Newton (a village entirely controlled by the Legh family) from 1814 until the constituency was abolished by the Reform Act of 1832;¹² he invested considerable efforts into developing the town of Warrington;¹³ most significantly for our purposes, he was responsible for extensive restorations and remodelling of Lyme Hall, which provided a distinctive context for the trophies and souvenirs of his youthful travels.

The three pieces of Athenian sculpture were set up in the Hall's library as part of the refurbishment of his house which was undertaken from 1814 under the direction of the architect Lewis Wyatt.¹⁴ The stele of Melisto and Epigenes (2) was set above the fireplace, and the two other pieces (1 and the uninscribed piece of sculpture) were placed in an alcove to the left of the fireplace (*Fig. 1*).¹⁵ As Oliver notes, while Legh was a fairly typical upper-class traveller of his period, "what is interesting about his three Athenian tombstones is the central role they play in *decorating* the home";¹⁶ indeed, "decoration" perhaps risks understating the prominence of their placement (and especially that of the stele of Megisto and Hegestratos) in the house, in settings in which a Grand Tourist of a previous generation might perhaps have hung, for example, a Canaletto.¹⁷ Certainly, there is good reason to think that their decorative role was, for Legh, enhanced by their function as souvenirs (and perhaps advertisements) of his early adventures. This is a theme which can be detected elsewhere in the Hall: casts of the

⁸ Beamont (104) claims that Legh, "startled by the news of the escape of the Emperor Napoleon from Elba", made his own way to Brussels and volunteered his services as a messenger; Croston describes him as an "extra aide-de-camp" to Wellington (309); Port suggests that his role was largely that of spectator (he "spent all day looking at the battle").

⁹ Michaelis, 160.

¹⁰ The first edition of the work appeared in 1816 (and an American edition of the same text was published in 1817). Only the second (British) edition, which was published in 1817, includes the account of Legh's stay in Athens and the excavations he undertook there.

¹¹ Irby and Mangles, 102-3.

¹² For details of Legh's (minimal) contributions to national politics in this period, see Port (he does not appear to have made any speeches in his eighteen years in Parliament).

¹³ Beamont, 106-7; traces of Legh's interventions can be seen in the street names of Warrington which were inspired by his travels: Palmyra Square, Egypt Street, Cairo Street and Suez Street.

¹⁴ Rothwell, 53. Wyatt belonged to the same architectural practice as (and was the nephew of) James Wyatt, who (in the period 1801-11) was responsible for the design of the gothic "Sculpture Cloister", created at Wilton House as a home for the antiquities collection of the Eighth Earl of Pembroke: Guilding, 295-301.

¹⁵ The uninscribed monument, and its setting in the Library of Lyme Hall, is depicted in two paintings of the late nineteenth century: one, of 1889, by Emily Jane Wodehouse, Lady Newton (NTPL 499389), and another of 1897, by Dulcibella (Sybil) Legh (NTPL 63712).

¹⁶ Oliver, 133. Rothwell (21-22) suggests that we might see an added poignancy in Legh's display of the Arkesis stele (1), given that Legh's first wife, Ellen, died in childbirth aged 21 in 1831; but this cannot, of course, have motivated Legh's original decision to place the stele on display. For a parallel example of the use of inscriptions as decorative elements in a collector's house, see *AIUK* 7 (Broomhall); we might perhaps interpret this as a smaller-scale version of the practice of constructing galleries or museums to hold collections of antiquities (for examples of which, see *AIUK* 8 (Chatsworth), *AIUK* 9 (Brocklesby Park), as well as James Wyatt's work at Wilton House (n. 14, above)).

¹⁷ On this aristocratic collecting habit, see (briefly) Links, 24-48 (esp. 45, for the display of Canaletto's works at Woburn Abbey).

Bassai frieze were placed in the Bright Gallery of the house,¹⁸ and Legh also commissioned and displayed a striking portrait of himself dressed in “oriental” costume, standing against a backdrop of desert and pyramids.¹⁹ Nonetheless, it would be unfair to characterise Legh as someone who saw antiquities merely as a source of prestige or a form of decoration; his *Narrative* demonstrates that he was interested, to some extent at least, in attempting to understand both the ancient and modern contexts for the things he saw and collected. And although his published work does not mention the inscriptions we discuss in this paper, it does include transcriptions of some Greek inscriptions which he saw at Dakki in Egypt (Legh, 178-79, 188), and even takes a position on the use of three- and four-barred sigmas as a dating criterion (Legh, 283-84).²⁰

Legh’s brief account of his excavations in Athens provides few details of either the locations or the results of his excavations. The only discoveries on which he dwells at any length, both found in excavations in the Kerameikos, are a “Terra Cotta vase, of extreme beauty and in a state of perfect preservation, and the curious marble basso-relievo” (Legh, 22, n.). The former is a red-figured *pelike*, depicting Zeus and Nike on the obverse and Hera and Hebe on the reverse (now in the British Museum: *ARI*² 622,50 [see [Beazley Archive](#)]; BM 1895,0831.1);²¹ the latter is the uninscribed funerary monument or dedication which we discuss in more detail in our commentary on 2. Legh reports that his excavations also yielded “numerous vases, inscriptions, and bas-reliefs”; we assume that those inscriptions and reliefs included the two inscribed funerary monuments which we discuss here, but Legh’s narrative gives no information which allows us to confirm this, or to pin down their place of discovery or purchase (Oliver notes that large sums of money paid out of Legh’s accounts in late 1813 may have settled debts incurred during his travels, and it is possible – though not certain – that the cost of purchasing antiquities formed part of these expenses).²²

¹⁸ The casts were given to Legh by the British Museum as a reward for his role in obtaining the originals: Rothwell, 35-36.

¹⁹ The portrait (NTPL 63295) is by William Bradbury, and still hangs in Lyme Hall.

²⁰ This is one of the earliest discussions of the possibility of dating inscriptions from the form of sigma (we are grateful to P. J. Rhodes for alerting us to this fact); although Legh’s concern at this point in his text is to provide a date for the red-figured *pelike* discussed below, he supports his argument with reference to inscriptions on stone (pointing to the archaic Phanodikos stele from Sigeion, *IG I*³ 1508, and the Nointel marble, *IG I*³ 1147, as examples of the earlier, three-barred, form; and to the Choiseul marble, *IG I*³ 375, as an example of the later, four-barred, form). These observations appear in sections of the work which appear under Legh’s name. However, given his disclaimer in his preface that he “makes no pretension to scientific research or depth of antiquarian erudition” (Legh, vii-viii), we might wonder if some or all of these comments derive from the notes of his tutor, Smelt, who is also thanked in the preface for allowing “use of his Journal, from which have been extracted many valuable notes and observations” (viii). (An Appendix which offers transcriptions of documents from Elephantine is explicitly credited to “the able pen of a friend, who has deeply studied the various branches of the antiquities of Egypt”: Legh, 289.)

²¹ In an Appendix to his *Narrative* (which gives a more detailed discussion, and drawings, of the vase and the uninscribed relief), Legh records that the vase was “discovered on the 17th May, 1811 ... 20 feet below the surface” (Legh, 279); he speculates (285) that it contained the ashes of Cimon, son of Miltiades. The vase formed part of the collection of Dr William Macmichael (1784-1839), who was present with Legh in Greece in 1811, and travelled with him again in 1817-18 (Legh, 21, n.; Macmichael, iv); it seems likely, therefore, that Macmichael played a more active role in the discovery of these objects than Legh’s account leads the reader to believe (indeed, Stackelberg, 15-16, credits Macmichael with the excavation of the vase). The vase then passed into the hands of a “T. Wood Esq.” (about whom nothing more is known), and was sold to the British Museum after Wood’s death (Sotheby’s Sale Catalogue, 9th July 1895, Lot 113).

²² Oliver, 129 n. 7.

The three pieces of Athenian sculpture do not appear to have been known to Michaelis (they are not included in his important publication of *Ancient Marbles in Great Britain* in 1882),²³ but were published first by Eugénie Strong (1860-1943), a British archaeologist and art historian,²⁴ in a short article of 1904. She worked on this occasion from photographs and had not studied the marbles in person at the time of publication. They were re-studied by Andreas Scholl and published in his 1995 edition of ancient sculpture at Lyme Park and other houses.²⁵



Fig. 1. The Library at Lyme Park, Stockport, Cheshire. NT Image no. 62194.
© National Trust Images/Andreas von Einsiedel.

²³ Nor are they included in the same author's later work on ancient marbles in Great Britain (Michaelis 1884). Michaelis does note (in *Ancient Marbles*, 160, n. 431) Legh's activities as a collector of antiquities, but only in relation to his role in the acquisition of the Bassai frieze.

²⁴ On Strong, see *ODNB*, s.n. "Eugénie [*née* Sellers] Strong": in 1890 she was the first female student to be admitted to the British School at Athens and gave lectures and demonstrations on Greek art at the British Museum. Her archaeological mentor was Sir Charles Newton at the British Museum. She acted as librarian and curator at Chatsworth House for the Duke of Devonshire between 1904 and 1908.

²⁵ Scholl 1995a, L1, 2, 3.

2. THE INSCRIPTIONS

1 FUNERARY STELE FOR ARKESIS. Lyme Park, NT 500255.3. Collected by Thomas Legh in 1811 or 1812, probably in Athens. A stele with shallow recessed relief panel crowned with an *anthemion* with acroteria decorated with acanthus foliage at the base of which grows a central palmette; there are lateral half-palmettes. The inscription is in the area between the *anthemion* and the recessed panel. The stele is complete and in good condition with the exception of damage to the acroteria and chips to the edges and surface of the stele. H. 1.21, w. 0.36. The letters are clear and evenly spaced in the style of ca. early fourth century BC. L. h. 0.025-0.027.

Eds. Strong, 358 no. 2 (ph.); (*IG II²* 10817); Clairmont, *CAT* 1.819 (ph.); Scholl 1995a L 2 (ph.); Scholl 1996 no. 443 (ph.).

Cf. Vermeule, 142. Autopsy Liddel and Low 2019. On display in the window bay (facing the piece of uninscribed Attic sculpture) of the Library of Lyme Hall. *Figs.* 2, 3.

ca. 400-360 BC Ἀρκέσις
Relief

Arkesis

On this grave stele a young woman holds a swaddled young baby and gazes at it. She is seated on a *diphros* (backless chair);²⁶ her feet rest on a low footstool; the composition is sculpted within a recessed panel. The fact that the child is swaddled suggests that it represents a newborn infant.²⁷ The image suggests that Arkesis died in childbirth. Greek funerary monuments commemorating the death of women in childbirth are well-attested, a reflection of the relatively high rate of maternal deaths at parturition,²⁸ as well as the blow to the material and emotional well-being of a family that the loss of a mother is likely to have represented. As the procreation of offspring was considered an important contribution of the female citizen in Athens,²⁹ a woman who had died in childbirth can perhaps be understood as the female equivalent of a male warrior who had died in battle for his city.³⁰ The depiction of a deceased mother interacting with an infant or child would serve to underline her maternal status as well as the status of her offspring (assuming that the child survived; it is not impossible that the infant represented in these monuments also died at birth). This is perhaps one way in which the funerary enclosure could have functioned as a source of family history, to be called on in cases where issues of status or inheritance came into question.³¹

²⁶ On ancient Greek words for different kinds of chair see Andrianou, 22-30.

²⁷ As Bobou, 103-6, notes, older children are usually represented as sitting on the ground.

²⁸ Margariti 2016a, 98, lists ten Attic examples (other than the one under discussion here) of funerary markers depicting a woman – who had presumably died in childbirth – and infant: Clairmont, *CAT* 1.691 (no inscription), 1.714 (no inscription), 1.844 (= *IG II²* 13078), 2.640 (= *IG II²* 12929), 2.725 (= *SEG XXXIII* 237), 2.727 (no inscription), 2.770 (no inscription), 2.810 (no inscription), 2.815 (no inscription), 3.703 (no inscription). To Margariti's list we can add *CAT* 2.719 (no inscription). See also Demand, 156-65; Lefkowitz and Fant, 337-38. On maternal mortality in antiquity, see Parkin, 104-5 (who estimates maternal mortality rates of approximately 10-15 per 1000 births).

²⁹ See e.g. Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, 648-57.

³⁰ Vedder; Osborne 1997, 31.

³¹ See, for instance, Isaios 6.64-5, where a speaker challenges his opponent to prove the legitimacy of Euktemon's children, demanding that he explain where Euktemon's wife was buried and in what sort of tomb. Aeschines (2.23) made a connection between the existence of family tombs (τάφοι

An alternative interpretation would be that Arkesis worked as a wet-nurse, and that the relief is intended as a commemoration of her labour, perhaps set up by a family who employed her. Kosmopoulou (286-87) observes that, although this role was typically associated with low-status women, their gravestones are close in style to those of citizen women. The layout and iconography of this stele closely resemble that of the monument for the wet-nurse Paideusis (*IG II² 12387* = Clairmont, *CAT* 1.249).³² However, on that occasion and others the wet-nurse's role is typically made explicit in the inscription by the inclusion of the term *τίτθη*, and although wet-nurses might be depicted with young children,³³ there are no extant examples of them being shown with infants.³⁴ On balance, therefore, it seems more likely that Arkesis was commemorated as a mother. This stele constitutes the sole known attestation of the name Arkesis from Athens (see *Athenian Onomasticon*; *PAA* 202935). She lacks a demotic, patronymic or the name of a husband. Little, therefore, can be said about the status of Arkesis or her background: we cannot be certain that she was an Athenian citizen.

The style of the decoration of the stele, with a central palmette and lateral half-palmettes decorated with acanthus leaves, is paralleled in other extant grave *stelai*.³⁵ Strong suggested that the stele dated to the late fifth or early fourth century; Kirchner (in *IG II²*) proposed a date of 390-365 BC, following Möbius, 30 n. 15 (pointing to the style of the palmettes). Scholl 1996 placed it in the second quarter of the fourth century; the letter-forms are perhaps more suggestive of a date in the first quarter of that century. We suggest ca. 400-360 BC.

προγόνων) and the state of being free; for other boasts of expenditure on burial, see Lys. 32.21; Dem. 40.52. See also Margariti 2016a; Lambert, [AIUK 2 \(BSA\)](#), 31 n. 111.

³² Osborne 2011, 74 observes that the iconography of Paideusis' *stèle* lacks any firm indication of the status of the deceased. Kosmopoulou, however, is probably right to argue that Paideusis is servile on the grounds of the fact that this is the sole attestation of her name and the use of the term *χρηστή*. Schulze, 37, notes that "Paideusis" is a typical "speaking slave name" connoting its bearer's "paideutic" role. On the representation of foreign nurses with Athenian children on grave *stelai*, see Bähler.

³³ E.g. Kosmopoulou N7, N9, N11.

³⁴ Kosmopoulou, 288 n. 88. Cf. Schulze, 37-40, who does not include the Arkesis stele in his catalogue of funerary monuments depicting nurses (105-110, AG1-80).

³⁵ Clairmont, *CAT* 1.250 = *IG II² 6902*; Clairmont, *CAT* 2.304a = *IG II² 12086*; Clairmont, *CAT* 3.305 = *SEG XXXIV 231*. For further discussion of acanthus decorations and palmettes, see *Agora XXXV* 21-23 and Liddel and Low, *AIUK 7* (Broomhall); cf. also Liddel and Low, *AIUK 10* (National Gallery, Scotland).



Fig. 2. 1. Lyme Park. © Forschungsarchiv für Antike Plastik. Köln.
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*Fig. 3. 1, detail. Lyme Park. © Forschungsarchiv für Antike Plastik. Köln.
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2 FUNERARY STELE FOR MELISTO AND EPIGENES. Lyme Park, NT 500255.2. Collected by Thomas Legh in 1811 or 1812, probably in Athens. A stele in the shape of a *naiskos* depicting three figures, two of which are carved in high relief. White-ish marble with pediment; acroteria are damaged or missing; the *stele* is broken at the lower left-hand corner. In the pediment, traces of a horizontal and a vertical stroke perpendicular to each other may be the result of subsequent damage. There are minor nicks all over the surface of the marble and the figures. The faces of all three figures – particularly that of the seated female – appear to have been damaged deliberately (Scholl 1995a). H. 1.485, w. 0.886, th. >0.076. The inscription is written on the architrave and is cut clearly and evenly with letters of ca. (mid-?) fourth century BC. L. h. 0.0157.

Eds. Strong, 357-58 no. 1 (ph.); (*IG* II² 6999); Clairmont, *CAT* 3.369c (ph.); Scholl 1995a L 1 (ph.).

Cf. Vermeule, 142; Oliver, 129-33 (ph.). Autopsy Liddel and Low 2019. Now embedded above the chimney piece in the library at Lyme Hall. *Figs.* 4, 5.

mid-iv BC Μελιστώ Ἡγεστράτου ἐξ Οἴο : Ἐπιγένης Μικρίωνος Ἐλευσίνιος.

Relief

Οἶο Liddel and Low (Οἴου Strong, Kirchner *IG* II², Clairmont). <Σ>μικρίωνος Kirchner *IG* II².

Melisto (daughter) of Hegestratos of Oion. Epigenes son of Mikrion of Eleusis.

Melisto, likely to be the daughter of Hegestratos (*PAA* 639600),³⁶ from one of the demes named Oion,³⁷ is represented as a young woman and is seated on a chair without a back (*diphros*); she is depicted clasping hands (in *dexiosis*)³⁸ with a bearded, mature, male who is probably Epigenes son of Mikrion from Eleusis (*PAA* 391620). The female figure in the background, sculptured in lower relief, is likely to be a servant.³⁹ As Melisto clasps hands with Epigenes, she appears to be about to remove her veil with her left hand; this gesture (known as *anakalypsis*) can, like *dexiosis*, often be a signifier of intimacy, but it can also evoke the act of

³⁶ We should note, however, that the relationship between Melisto and Hegestratos is not made explicit by the inscription: see further discussion below, and cf. *IG* II² 5231, 5272, 5377, 5408, 6873 with [AIO's notes](#).

³⁷ This could be Oion Dekeleikon (in tribe VIII Hippothontis) or Oion Kerameikon (in tribe IV Leontis): see Harpokration s.v. Οἶον; Traill, 124; Whitehead, 74-75. Neither deme is particularly geographically close to Eleusis, the deme of Epigenes, but Eleusis is in the same tribe as Oion Dekeleikon (VIII Hippothontis).

³⁸ For a list of memorials with *dexiosis* representations, see Clairmont, *CAT* 6 Index, s.v. “Dexiosis” p. 99. There has been a good deal of discussion of the significance of the *dexiosis* motif in funerary art: see Friis Johansen, 53-64, 149-51, offering the conclusion that “it is a manifestation of the fundamental thought that the two parties together make up a whole, the family, which the intervention of death has failed to sunder, and that as parts of this whole they are of equal importance”. See also Davies 1985 and 1994, emphasising the multiplicity of connotations related to *dexiosis* (meeting, separation and marriage) which were deployed by sculptors to achieve complexity and ambiguity. Pemberton argues on the basis of non-funerary parallels that the motif exhibits unity of family, past and present, rather than representing a gesture of “farewell”; Closterman, 635 n. 10 discusses other recent scholarship on *dexiosis* emphasising unity and common citizenship. See also Cremer, *Agora* XXXV 38, Margariti 2016b, 183-84, and Lambert’s discussion at [AIUK 2 \(BSA\)](#), 31 n. 112 and [AIUK 3 \(Fitzwilliam\)](#), 33.

³⁹ Margariti (2016b, 186) observes that the background of *dexiosis* scenes is sometimes reserved for “secondary figures”, such as servants or relatives.

marriage, or married status,⁴⁰ as it appears to do here. Given the iconography it is likely, therefore, that the two principal figures represented on this stele were married; moreover, they both appear to be commemorated in its inscribed labels.⁴¹ Their demotics demonstrate that they were Athenian citizens.⁴² Melisto and Epigenes are not rare names in Athens, precluding confident identification, though there are other examples of men named Epigenes from the deme of Eleusis with whom this man could plausibly be identified.⁴³ There may be a connection with the Epigenes (identified by name only) of *I. Eleus.* 85, line 2 (332/1 BC), proposer of a decree of the Eleusinians praising Philokomos and Moirokles. However, although a family link is not impossible, that decree is rather late for comfortable identification of its proposer with our Epigenes.

Kirchner (on *IG II²* 6999) suggested that “Epigenes son of Mikrion” was a stone cutter’s error for “son of Smikrion” (i.e. by haplography of the final sigma of Ἐπιγένης); Smikrion is indeed a more common name (9 instances in the *Athenian Onomasticon*), and a Smikrion of Eleusis is attested as the father of Philoxenos and Aristodike on a substantial fourth-century *naiskos* funerary monument (*IG II²* 6052) from Athens.⁴⁴ If the stone-cutter indeed made a mistake, Philoxenos and Aristodike would be the siblings of our Epigenes.⁴⁵ But Mikrion is a quite plausible name here: a Mikrion was the father of a –δημος on a dedication to Amphiaraios at Rhamnous in the fourth century BC (*IG II³* 4, 929). Moreover, it is plausible that the name was formed as a result of dissimulation from the more common Smikrion, influenced by other names beginning MIK- (e.g. Μικίων).⁴⁶ There is, therefore, no need to amend the text. (On the possibility that our Epigenes is to be identified with the comic poet of the same name, see below.)

⁴⁰ On the relationship between marriage and unveiling, see Oakley and Sinos, 25; Stears, 119-20; *Agora* XXXV, p. 2 n. 14; Grossman 2001, 24-26, citing J. Paul Getty Museum 71.AA.121. *Agora* XXXV, p. 39, table 5, counts between 19 and 21 examples of this gesture from the Athenian Agora funerary monuments, of which 8 are engaged also in *dexiosis*. Family relations between the figures represented, however, are unclear. For extensive discussion of unveiling, see Llewellyn-Jones, 98-104, dismissing the idea that it could represent simply a polite greeting (at 103) and emphasising (at 104) that it might also act as a gesture unrelated to marriage when a woman was depicted without adult males; cf., for instance, the funerary monument for Myttoppe with Myrrhine, where the standing figure appears to remove her veil (cf. Lambert, [AIUK 2 \(BSA\)](#), no. 9). For another example of unveiling in an Attic funerary monument in a UK collection, see Liddel and Low, *AIUK* 8 (Chatsworth), no. 1.

⁴¹ For examples of where a *dexiosis* scene is accompanied by only a single name-label, see Lambert, [AIUK 3 \(Fitzwilliam\)](#), nos. 4, 5; Liddel and Low, *AIUK* 7 (Broomhall); and Clairmont, *CAT* 6, pp. 49-60; often, however, both figures in a *dexiosis*-scene are labelled: see Lambert, [AIUK 2 \(BSA\)](#), no. 14 and *CAT* 6, pp. 52-53. However, as Margariti 2016b, 186 writes, “it is more usual for all non-slave figures to be named”.

⁴² On the relevance of tombs to claims about status, see Marchiandi, 111-13; Closterman; Lambert [AIUK 2 \(BSA\)](#), 31 n. 111; Lambert, [AIUK 3 \(Fitzwilliam\)](#), 33 with n. 101. More specifically on the use of patronymics and demotics in supporting those claims, Meyer, 107-12.

⁴³ See *Athenian Onomasticon*.

⁴⁴ In this monument, Smikrion stands in *dexiosis* with Philoxenos while Aristodike looks on: there are resemblances in the arrangement to the current monument (*non vidimus*; see the description at Clairmont, *CAT* 1.267).

⁴⁵ This is the view taken by Humphreys, 1125 n. 69.

⁴⁶ See Threatte I, 506-10.

Rather characteristically, therefore, those named on this monument are not firmly attested as members of prominent families;⁴⁷ and yet they were evidently comfortably well-off.⁴⁸

Given our understanding of how, in classical Athenian practice, the female's *kyrios* shifted from father to husband once she had married, it is notable that Melisto is referred to by her father's name even though she was apparently the wife of Epigenes: this suggests an ongoing connection of this married woman with her paternal *oikos*. Patterns of female nomenclature on funerary monuments have yet to be studied comprehensively. Under Pericles' citizenship law an Athenian citizen had to be of citizen descent on both the male and female side, and this form of nomenclature may have been designed to display Melisto's citizenship qualifications. Another possibility is that Melisto was an heiress (*epikleros*) whose father had died without leaving a direct male heir. In that case presumably her father, before his death, would have betrothed her to Epigenes (it is less likely that Epigenes claimed her as her father's next-of-kin: cf. *Ath. Pol.* 56.7). Epigenes, then, would have administered her wealth until they produced a son who would inherit it.⁴⁹ This possibility is perhaps supported by the fact that the third figure bears a box, possibly a jewellery casket, which might represent the wealth brought to the household in the form of Melisto's *kleros*. The size of the stele and quality of the relief suggests that considerable expenditure was invested in this monument. Moreover, whatever its precise significance, the depiction of a female attendant carrying a jewellery box seemingly represents a display of significant economic resources,⁵⁰ reflecting the wealth and aspiration of the family of Epigenes and Melisto.

Strong suggested that the stele should be dated to about 420 BC; Kirchner (in *IG II*²) proposed a fourth-century BC date. Scholl went further (1995a, 82; 1995b), identifying Epigenes as the poet of Middle Comedy (*PAA* 391350),⁵¹ who, he suggested, was commemorated also on the piece of uninscribed sculpture also at Lyme Park. The iconography of this piece, depicting a seated male holding a scroll and gazing at a comic mask while a second mask hangs above him, suggests an association with comic poetry (*Fig. 6*).⁵² Scholl's identification of our Epigenes with the comic poet is very reliant on his assertion that the pieces

⁴⁷ The Epigenes son of Lysanias of Eleusis commemorated on the fourth-century grave marker, *IG II*² 6031, is another possible relative.

⁴⁸ For a view that those represented on funerary monuments might typically represent a "middle class" of Athenians, see Marchiandi, 185-93; cf. Lambert, *AIUK 2 (BSA)*, 30.

⁴⁹ On *epikleroi* and their betrothal, see *Ath. Pol.* 56.7; Isaios 10.12-14; Schaps, 25-47; Todd, 228-31; Humphreys, 109-18.

⁵⁰ Cf. Hagermajer Allen, 225-29; for other examples, see Clairmont, *CAT* 6, Index s.v. "Box held by girl servant-maid", p. 86.

⁵¹ For his fragments, which derive from Athenaios and lexicographers of the post-classical period, see *PCG* V 165-69 F 1-8.

⁵² On the piece of uninscribed sculpture, hitherto taken to be funerary, see Clairmont, *CAT* 1.400 = Scholl 1995a L 3; cf. Harvey, 117-18 n. 21. Webster, 117 AS 1, dating it to ca 380 BC, speculated that it commemorated Aristophanes, the famous poet of Old Comedy; however, Himmelmann dated it on iconographical grounds to the 350s (adding the suggestion that the sculptured beard was reworked in the Hellenistic period) and argued that it may therefore have represented a Middle Comedian. For the view that this is the earliest rendering of a dramatic poet together with comic masks, see Himmelmann and (emphasising that it is unusual) Csapo, 23, 75. Two other examples of theatrical masks are attested on Athenian tombstones: see Clairmont, *CAT* 1.075 and 4.270 (both uninscribed); a closer parallel to this scene, however, is to be found not on a funerary monument, but a dedication, *IG II*³ 4, 636, and it can not be ruled out that this piece was also a dedication (for examples of dedications found in the Kerameikos, compare *IG II*³ 4, 330, 332, 335, 369, 407, 613, 642, 966; *IG II*³ 4, 975 is a votive dedication to Dionysos, found near the Sacred Gate, although it is significantly later than the Lyme example, dating to the first century AD).

were discovered in the same location. However, Legh's own account in the second edition of his *Narrative of a Journey in Egypt and the Country beyond the Cataracts*, while it maintains that the uninscribed stele (and the *pelike* it was found with) were discovered near the Dipylon gate, says nothing about the original provenance of the stele of Melisto and Epigenes (or, indeed, that of Arkesis: cf. 1):

“The Terra Cotta vase, of extreme beauty and in a state of perfect preservation, and the curious marble basso-relievo ... were found in the sepulchres we opened at a short distance from the walls of the city on the western side of the road that leads to Thebes.” (Legh, 22, n.).

Accordingly, Scholl's identification of Epigenes as the comic poet is unlikely. There is also nothing in the testimonia or fragments of this author to suggest an association with the deceased of our inscription.⁵³ On the basis of this identification Scholl suggested a date of 350-340 BC for Epigenes' stele. Even without the identification, this date is quite possible, though the form of the demotic “ἐξ Οῖο”, with Ο for ΟΥ, pulls towards the higher dating.⁵⁴ We suggest mid-4th century BC.

⁵³ The father's name and demotic of this Epigenes are not attested. It is surely no more than coincidence that he was supposed to be the author of a play entitled *The Little Tomb (Mnematōn)*: Athenaios, *Deipnosophistai*, 11.472e.

⁵⁴ Ο for ΟΥ becomes rarer in Attic inscriptions after 350 BC, as Threatte (I 258) notes: “private texts contain no convincing examples of Ο for ΟΥ later than ca. 330”.



Fig. 4. 2. Lyme Park. © Forschungsarchiv für Antike Plastik. Köln.
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*Fig. 5. 2, detail. Lyme Park. © Forschungsarchiv für Antike Plastik. Köln.
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Fig. 6. Uninscribed sculpture. Lyme Park. © Forschungsarchiv für Antike Plastik. Köln. Photograph no. FA 2078-00. Photographer: R. Laev.